



Photograph of a "Shakerscript" hymn from a manuscript now in the Library of Congress. It was written in White Water Village, Ohio. (Existed from 1824 to 1907).

tivates the ear because of its severe simplicity and perfect melody. Their movements in the dance are all graceful and appropriate and as I gazed upon that congregation of four and five hundred worshipers... I felt certain that, were it seen upon a stage, ... the involuntary exclamation of even the hypercritical would be, 'How beautiful!'

In 1952, of the original number of 4,000 and 20 communities, barely 50 are still left, living in three communities; Sabbathday Lake, Me., Hancock, Mass., and East Canterbury, N. H. These members are all too old to dance. Their hymns and dances are still perpetuated not by Shakers but by a group of five women "of the world" of Enfield, N. H. where once the Shakers were a strong and active community. Mrs. Fred (Clarice) Carr is the earnest student and teacher of the disappearing Shaker rituals. It is to her that I am most grateful for much of her selfless help. Mrs. Carr is now working on a thorough book on the Shakers, which will be of historic value. She is in possession of many pictures and a wealth of material.



Mrs. Fred Carr, of Enfield, N. H., is pictured in the center of her girls "of the world." White, for virginity, and blue for love, were the colors used in the daily garb of the Shakers.

Books used for this article: *The New Testament; History of the Jews* by Prof. H. Graetz; *The Shaker*, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1857; *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Shaker Church*, Enfield, N. H., October 18, 1893. *The Shakers in Niskayuna* in the "Leslie's Popular Monthly," 1885.



LITHUANIAN SAHARA

The dunes along the Baltic Sea in Lithuania take an appearance of the Sahara transplanted to Northern Europe.

THE STORY OF THE FLEA AND THE FLY

Once upon a time (as all stories begin) a flea met a fly on the highway out of Kaunas.

"Where goest thou, Utute (Dearest Flea)?"

"To Russia, I am going."

"What for, are you not satisfied in žemaitija?" (Northern Lithuania)

"No," replied the flea, "In žemaitija it is a hard life for me. Hardly had I made my home in the back of a sturdy žemaitis and prepared to hatch my children, when, knowing my presence, he cast me into a hamper filled with soiled linen. Then there came an old bobelė (woman), gathered these linens and dropped them into a sea of water, and Lord! I thought I would surely drown! But that is not all! I had hardly swum to the top when along came a maiden in a great hurry and put me into a huge vat, and I was on the verge of losing my skin when she began to light a fire under me. But summoning all my remaining energy I made a great leap to safety. Now, when I was in Russia—Ah! There I lived in peace with the whole family; no one ever troubled me. That is why I return to that peaceful land."

"With me," retorted the fly, "it is a different story. žemaitija pleases me better. When I was there, not only was I well fed, but was able to feed royally even my children. If I should fall into a big platter—the child or the housewife, filling a half spoonful of barščiu (beet soup-borsch) along with me, would throw me to the floor, where I could feed myself aplenty and the whole brood of my children. But when I was in Russia, I nearly died of hunger. If I should fall into a platter of barščiu, there the youngster, taking me into a spoon, after shaking me free of every drop of the barščiu, would hurl me to the floor with such force that I thought my very bones would be shattered. Such intolerance I could no longer stand. I return to my beloved žemaitija."

Old Lithuanian Folk Tale—
Translated by Vytautas Beilajus

VILTIS

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Ex "Dill Pickle" Now A "College of Complexes"

JOHN MITCHELL

"The College of Complexes" is the mid-century version of the old "Dill Pickle Club". The latter, a hangout for bums, neurotics, intellectuals, and Chicago's literati, was dissolved by the liquor of racketeers. "The Dill Pickle Club" is remembered for being the meeting place of such people as Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Vachel Lindsey, Carl Sandburg, and others who either died in the gutter or became famous through their literary efforts. The Club was founded in 1917 by Jack Jones, an organizer for the I. W. W., or the "Wobblies". Its meeting place was down a back alley at 876½ North Dearborn, to which one could also enter by crawling through a hole in the wall.

In the late forties a few of the surviving members of this old honorary society decided to revive "Ye Ole Dill Pickle", giving it a slightly more academic character, in name at least, of "College of Complexes". Although as yet there has been no formal enrollment. The North Central Association has agreed to investigate the college next month to determine whether or not it meets the requirements for accreditation.

"The Curriculum", the irregular class program which comes out almost every month is the literary efforts of Slim, The Janitor, who is Dean of something or other and serves the inspiration for higher thoughts to the student and faculty. Two beers pay for a two hour lecture or discussion fee.

"The College", located at 1651 North Wells Street, parking distance from Newberry Square, sometimes alluded to, as "Bug House Square", is providing a fence for the roosters of the folk song world of Chicago. Even Flemming Brown who has risen above the hoi polloi by appearing weekly at The Blue Angel on Rush Street where he entertains the \$3.00 minimum crowd sometimes descends to strum his banjo along with the "back to nature" banjo players from the University of Chicago. Twice monthly that crowd descends upon "The College" for a Sunday recital, which later, if the inspiration has flowed freely is supplemented by the songs of the class members from hither and yon. But one never knows where talent lies, for only last week one Irish boy took time out from his bottle of beer and Comic book to sing some old Irish folk songs in the most beautiful voice you could ever hope to hear.

Regulars on these Sunday matinees are Professors Bill and Eleanor Brooks, who plan the inspirational program; Ella Jenkins, who does interpretations of Afro-Cubano music with tom-tom accompaniment; Jean Leibundguth (formerly Jean Curtis) a newcomer to the group with a beautiful voice; and John Mitchell, the 1953 chauffeur to the editor of VILTISS. Others who appear on the program from time to time are Bernie Asbell, who was once invited by President Roosevelt to sing at the Whitehouse; Moe Hirsch, an expert at playing anything with strings; Jerry Breen, who combines lovely looks with a lovely voice; Gene Weiger, who sings English Ballads in a high falsetto; and Gilda Simon, who sings Yiddish songs preceded by vibrant translations made even more expressive in her singing.

Tom Coffee, one of the old timers in a statement for VILTISS, says, "The College of Complexes is the last frontier of Chicago's Bohemia."

The monthly program as listed in the February "Curriculum" runs something like this:

Wed. 3rd - "Is The White Man Losing Africa?" by Mr. Bobo Emodi, who is a native of Nigeria.

Sun. 7th - Commencement Exercises.

4:00 p.m. At the College of Complexes we graduate the teacher instead of the pupils. Degrees of Bachelor of Complexes, Maximum Rum Laudenum will be given to all featured performers at the College for the last year. The Janitor will give the Bacchuslaureate address.

Wed. 10th - Tryouts for Folk Singers. Bring your talent. Otherwise come and listen. Our last tryout (Run by Bill and Eleanor Brooks) was terrific.

Sun. 14th - "Sing Ninety Nine and Ninety"

4:00 p.m. Folk Music recital by the Brooks and that wondrous company of folk singers. Music for the masses. Come for lunch and sing with them.

Sun. 28th - "Sing Ninety Nine and Ninety"

4:00 p.m. If you're a sophisticate stay away. This is music of, by, and for the PEOPLE. If you're people come and sing with them.

THE REVIVAL OF FOLK SONGS

By JOHN MITCHELL

America is becoming increasingly aware of its folk heritage. With the invention of the radio people began to realize more passive entertainments then they laid down their fiddles, guitars, and games and turned on the radio, and now television. Yet there has always been those who would preserve the folk traditions; those people who would continue to enjoy creative activities and preserve these folk arts until those to whom they belonged would be willing to accept them again. In the middle thirties, with the people submerged in a financial depression, many had to call upon the resourcefulness to supply themselves with adequate entertainment. There had come an ebb in the general public's interest in folk activities. Now, in the middle of the twentieth century, the people in America are gaining a new interest in their folk heritage.

One of the marks of this trend is the enthusiasm with which the public received "The Weavers," a quartet of folk singers. This group brought many of the forgotten folk melodies to "hit parade fame" and public notice. Even earlier Burl Ives, a folk singer became popular in the entertainment world because of renditions of the old folk tunes.

There were also the collectors of folk music who wrote down these songs, and with the coming of the recording machine, collected the melodies on discs. Among the most prolific collectors, John Lomax is probably the best known. As a lad in Texas he collected cowboy songs. At Harvard he was able to imbue sufficient interest to gain a fellowship. This later led to his publishing his first book in 1910, *Cowboy Songs*, and from thence numerous books of folk songs. Today hardly a collection goes to print without some of the songs collected by Alan or John Lomax.

However, it is the singers of these songs which causes them to live. Among those bards of folk music are such people as Woody Guthrie, considered today to be America's foremost balladier. Woody had an extremely hard life, most of the early years which were spent in Oklahoma. At an early age he went on the road; his song "Hard Travelin'" is an apt description of his life "on the bum." Most of his songs describe workers and their struggles. "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," a song of the "dust bowl" has gained a great deal of popularity. Folkways Record Company has pressed a number of "dust bowl ballads."

Huddie Ledbetter, better known as Leadbelly, a Texas convict with a unique, and some would say unsurpassed quality in his expression is credited with the writing of the song "Irene, Goodnight"; this song got him a pardon from the Texas State Penitentiary. Yet few people were aware of the origin of this song and its history, and Leadbelly is a name little known outside of the circles who take an interest in folk music.

Peter Seeger, whose father and mother, Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, made notable contributions to the archives of folk music, traveled about the country singing songs to the strum of his banjo. This instrument, an invention of the Negro slaves is the only true American musical instrument, and yet it has almost become unknown among those who first played it.

There are too many collections and singers to list here, but for those who have the interest I have listed a few books which might interest those interested in pursuing the subject farther.

LOMAX, John A. *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1947.

This book is an autobiography of the career of John and tells of his hunting down folk songs, and how he helped to stimulate interest in folk music. There are a few lyrics,